1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
535 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which
535 springs up wherever the young people of the community gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

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834 571 and play for the young men and women of the rural communities. The customs and conventions which surround them are constant reminders of marriage and its hopes and privileges.

834 571 626 Yet as soon as any intimacy of acquaintanceship builds up between a particular pair, they are matched together in local gossip. They are forced to take a position which is only a single step from betrothal. But, as elsewhere, lovers separate to find others. Though a once or twice fickle or jilted girl is subjected to constant gossip, her luck seems not to doom her entirely if she is attractive or a good match.

834 571 626 535 Such outings as the "patterns," [2] relics of saints' festivals, and race meetings in summer, and the dances in winter, are occasions of courtship, excitement, and philandering of sorts in the countryside. They are objects of censure on the part of those of the clergy, townsmen, and people of higher class who unite in condemning more obvious manifestations of peasant social life with little insight into a custom's function. The clergy, in particular, fulminate constantly against all-night dances. They object not so much to the jollities as to the opportunities for "walking out" among the young couples.

834 535 571 The following quotations from country people describe the situation. In the first a countryman is talking about "crabbit lads" who are to blame for local sexual irregularities, and comes around at last to the local dances:

> They are awfully crabbit around here. If a girl has money or land and she will get it, the boys try any way at all to put her up the hill so they will marry her and get it. And the parents keep the girl away from the boys for fear it will happen. But it is no good to keep the girl in the house, because, if you do, she knows nothing. Let her knock away and she soon learns how to take care of herself. If you don't, there are ways the crabbit lads will get to her.

[2] The local name of country festivals once religious, somewhat like the *pardons* of Brittany.

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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that.

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The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships.

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Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

476 571 248 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it from the rafters. About the first of November you would take it down and some men would come in and help break it. They would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 571 283 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal* of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that time. At seven in the evening they would be through and within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin [535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the [266] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

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and now they would never think of growing it but must be running to town and buying what they want.

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for the development of specialists who could give their skills back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account:

> With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It might take several days before they were through and they would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on.

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the members of the community were accustomed to work in close association. The behavior described here is that which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the

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476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of [535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
571 But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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among them. Most of the young men between twenty-five and thirty-five met there. Through the winter months they met nearly every night, and played the usual games of the countryside, 'nap' and 'forty-five', often far into the wee hours. Other groups through the community met like these men and followed like pursuits with an equal zest.

At times, a custom somewhat more organized, the 'gamble', unites them all. It often brings in other young men across the lines separating community from community. As often as once a week, a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household in its turn throws open its doors to the card-players. Admission, usually a shilling, goes to defraying the expense of a supper and tea for all and goes toward the prize.

For the gamble is one of many sporting events. The prize may be a turkey, or two geese, even a young pig or calf. Elaborate conventions govern the play, and the winner may count himself a proud man. To be known in the countryside, far and wide, as a 'great gambler' is a coveted distinction proving shrewdness and skill. The country dance is another such event, and still enlivens the countryside in the winter months, bringing the younger members of the communities together and providing honour for the distinguished. For 'a great dancer' is as widely known. In summer, hurley, the national game, has the same effect; and nowadays, through the nation-wide organization of the Gaelic

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon [476] which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an [482] incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing ● [535] and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already
• [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance
[431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well;
[574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleamhnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of
343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of
621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

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Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

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The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[831] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[197] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

• 535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

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Women tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one another's laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; the, may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes: